



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Growth of malignant cells in the prostate gland, the gland at the base of the urinary bladder in men that helps form semen. Many prostate cancers grow very slowly and never cause symptoms or spread. It usually affects men over age 50.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Early stages:

- No symptoms (usually). Most prostate cancers are discovered during a routine rectal examination.

Later stages:

- Urinary obstruction.
- Pain in the low back or pelvis from spread of cancer.

CAUSES

Unknown. Prostate cancer does not seem related to an enlarged prostate, a common condition in older men.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Genetic predisposition.
- Hormonal influences.
- Exposure to cancer-causing chemicals.
- Sexually transmitted disease.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive measures. A yearly rectal examination after age 40 is the best way to detect early prostate cancer.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Often curable with surgery if treated before cancer spreads. Even after spread, therapy can relieve symptoms and prolong life.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Fatal spread to bone, bladder and other organs.
- Urinary incontinence.
- Sexual impotence after surgery (sometimes).



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Diagnostic tests may include digital rectal examination (DRE), core-needle biopsy, prostate-specific antigen (PSA), and transrectal ultrasound. For staging to determine any spread of the cancer, a bone scan, measurement of serum prostatic acid phosphatase and biopsy of prostate tissue and lymph node tissue are performed.
- Some prostate cancers grow quite slowly, and some men may choose to not treat with radiation, surgery or chemotherapy.
- Surgery is usually recommended, unless pre-existing medical conditions, such as chronic heart, lung, kidney or liver disease, or advanced age prohibit it.
- Surgery to remove the prostate gland and testes (sometimes), if the cancer has not spread.
- Radiation or hormone treatment, if the cancer has spread or for patients unable to undergo surgery.
- Psychotherapy or counseling, if sexual difficulties occur after treatment.
- Additional information available from the American Cancer Society, local branch listed in the telephone directory, or call (800) ACS-2345. Another source is the Cancer Information Clearinghouse at (800) 4-CANCER.

MEDICATIONS

- Hormones (usually estrogens or leutinizing hormone releasing hormone) to slow malignant growth in bones. Other chemotherapy treatment is not effective with prostate cancer.
- Analgesics to control pain.

ACTIVITY

Resume your normal activities gradually after surgery. Resume sexual relations when able.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of prostate cancer.
- During treatment, any sign of urinary-tract infection occurs, such as frequent, difficult or painful urination, fever and chills, aching around the genitals or rectum, or backache.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.